



A Felt Truth

Historical Interpretation has long been a hallmark of the National Park Service and the agency's effort to facilitate visitor understanding and appreciation of America's special places. The National Park Service has strong partners in those who study the past by stepping temporarily into its clothing and customs. They share their knowledge with the public as reenactors or "*Living Historians*." This interpretive technique departs from the traditional formal interpretation of a historical event, battlefield or personality, by allowing for an interactive and objective approach to a topic that may otherwise be perceived as uninteresting or sterile. Living history and costumed interpretation offers the visitor an opportunity to experience the "*felt truth*" of an historical personality or event through the words, clothing and actions of a costumed interpreter.

Joining the Ranks

Individuals or groups that want to participate in living history programs at Arkansas Post National Memorial must understand how their activities will contribute to park interpretive goals. We work with people that function in a professional manner, demonstrate a willingness to learn, collaborate effectively with others and possess a positive attitude. We will provide guidance on standards for authenticity and sources which are reflective of accurate scholarship. As a National Park Service living history volunteer you will be part of a team that has provided quality interpretive programs to millions of national park visitors from all over the world.

Historic Weapons

The living historian uses many tools to facilitate visitor understanding of his or her particular period. A volunteer at a national park site interpreting colonial farming may use oxen and plow to illustrate 18th century farm technology. A site interpreting 19th century black smithing would likely use a bellows and forge to demonstrate iron-working. Costumed interpretation at a battle field site may include a historic weapons demonstration. Living history programs at Arkansas Post National Memorial predominately interpret colonial garrison life and the 1863 civil war battle of Arkansas Post. Consequently, historic weapon demonstrations play a large part in our living history program.

Any time historic weapons are used there is an increased risk of injury. Because safety is of paramount importance, the NPS adheres to and enforces strict safety regulations. From the matchlock musket to a large crew-served cannon, all volunteers and rangers are required to attend and successfully complete sixteen hours of historic weapons safety training before they are allowed to participate in any historic weapons demonstration. Any time a historic weapon is carried or used in a park program, it must be treated as if it were loaded and a nationally trained and certified Historic Weapons Inspector must be present.

For More Information Contact:

Ray Hamel
Arkansas Post National Memorial
(870) 5482207
Raymond_Hamel@nps.gov



French Marine 1750
"Post aux Arkansasae"

I. *Interpretive Opportunities and Living History*

A. What is Interpretation?

- 1.) Universal Concepts
- 2.) Tangible resources
- 3.) Intangible resources

B. Interpretive Goals

- 1.) Visitor understanding and appreciation
- 2.) Emotional connections to the story
- 3.) Resource stewardship
- 4.) Objectivity
- 5.) A compelling story - why should they care?

C. Themes, Goals and Objectives

- 1.) The theme of your program
- 2.) The goal of your program
- 3.) The objective of your program

D. Accomplishing Interpretive Goals with Living History

- 1.) First person interpretation
- 2.) Third Person interpretation
- 3.) Interpretive demonstrations

II. *Historic Weapons*

A. Development and function of small arms

- 1.) The *Hachenbusch*
- 2.) The matchlock and wheellock
- 3.) The Flintlock
- 4.) The caplock
- 5.) The breech loader

B. Development and function of Artillery

- 1.) Siege Engines
- 2.) Bombards
- 3.) The “modern” cannon
 - 16th century
 - 17th century and Gustavus Adolphus
 - 18th century - the age of the enlightenment and the science of gunnery
 - 19th century - rifled artillery

C. Projectiles

- 1.) Small arms
 - ball
 - shot
 - minie ball
- 2.) Artillery
 - solid shot
 - explosive shell and the fuze
 - scatter projectiles
 - incendiaries
 - fixed ammunition and sabots

D. Nomenclature

- 1.) The musket
- 2.) The tube and carriage

III. *Black Powder Safety*

A. Origins of Black Powder - “the devil’s invention”

B. What is Black Powder?

1.) Chemical composition

2.) Granulation

3.) Combustion

4.) Stability

C. National Park Service Safety Guidelines

1.) Storage

2.) Handling

3.) Maximum loads

4.) Range safety

5.) Textiles - what not to wear

6.) Misfires

7.) Cartridges

8.) Weapon inspection

D. Musket Drill - The manual of arms

E. Cannon Drill - The manual of arms

